



VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

Toolkit for Outreach Partners



Partner with Us to Get the Word Out



Here at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), one of our highest priorities is providing timely access to high-quality health care for Veterans. On August 7, 2014, the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA) was signed into law. Part of this law included the creation of the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). The VCP allows Veterans who are already enrolled in VA health care to receive health care in their community, while still having access to their regular VA health care. Since the program began, over 1.75 million unique Veterans have received health care closer to home through the VCP.

The VA understands you share our commitment to Veterans and greatly values your ongoing collaboration and partnership. We know that Veterans look to you as a trusted source of information and guidance. We believe you are uniquely positioned to help us spread the word about the VCP. The information and materials in this toolkit will help you to more easily share information about the VCP. These materials will also help you inform partners, government officials, and the broader public about how the VCP contributes to the broader goal of enhancing Veterans' access to the care and benefits they need and deserve.

The materials in this toolkit offer your organization or office the flexibility to pick and choose pieces that meet your specific communication needs. Each section features useful materials (such as fact sheets, frequently asked questions, and social media content) and tips for actively engaging with VA. We have also included sample communication and templates that you can customize for specific events and combine with any content you create on your own.



TABLE OF CONTENTS



3 Grab-and-Go Print Materials



15 Plug-and-Play Content



19 Social Media Support



25 Using VA as a Resource

You can download each piece of the toolkit for customization and distribution at
[Veterans Choice Program Resources](#)



Grab-and-Go Print Materials

These materials can be printed and shared with Veterans and any other stakeholders. This information can also be repurposed to support any inquiries received via telephone, email, or in-person.

10 Things to Know About the Veterans Choice Program (VCP)	4
Veterans Choice Program Law Changes Fact Sheet	6
Veterans Choice Program Flyer (VCP).....	8
Veterans Choice Program (VCP) Eligibility Details.....	9
Question & Answer by Topic.....	10

10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM (VCP)

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a benefit that allows eligible Veterans to receive health care from a community provider rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.

1. Am I eligible for the Veterans Choice Program?

- To be eligible for the program, you must be enrolled in VA health care and must also meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - You are told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days for an appointment.
 - Your residence is more than a 40 mile driving distance from the closest VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician.
 - You need to travel by air, boat, or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to your house.
 - You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on a geographic challenge, environmental factor, medical condition, or other specific clinical decisions. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you are eligible for any of these reasons.
 - You reside in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services and surgical care, and reside more than 20 miles from such a VA medical facility. Note: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC and are therefore not eligible for the Veterans Choice Program.

2. What if I think I am eligible?

- Call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198 or visit the Veterans Choice Program website to verify eligibility and set up an appointment [here](#).

3. Can I call my non-VA doctor to make an appointment?

- No, please call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198 to verify eligibility and set up an appointment.

4. How is the 40 mile calculation determined?

- This calculation is based on the driving distance from your permanent residence (or active temporary address) to the closest VA facility, including Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and VA Medical Centers. You are eligible if you live more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility that has a full-time primary care physician.

5. If I am eligible for the Veterans Choice Program, can I receive Beneficiary Travel for travel to appointments with a VCP provider?

- Yes, the Choice Act does provide funding to pay for travel to VCP providers for Veterans who are eligible for Beneficiary Travel. However, it did not provide any new Beneficiary Travel eligibility.

6. If I didn't get my Choice Card or I lost my Choice Card, what do I do?



- You do not need your Choice Card to access the VCP. If you didn't receive a Choice Card or lost your Choice Card, simply call 866-606-8198 to find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment.

7. How do I get my prescription filled if I use the Veterans Choice Program?

- The community provider you see through the VCP can issue a prescription for up to a 14 day supply of a national formulary drug. You may have the 14 day supply filled at any non-VA pharmacy of your choosing.
- Prescriptions can be reimbursed through the Business Office/Non-VA Care Coordination Office at VA facilities. This reimbursement may take 30-45 days to process, and requires a copy of the prescription and the original receipt. Veterans cannot be reimbursed at the VA Pharmacy.
- For prescriptions needed past 14 days, please follow standard procedures to fill a prescription at the VA pharmacy.

8. If I use the Veterans Choice Program, does that affect my VA health care?

- No, not at all. You do not have to choose between the two. The VCP is here to make it easier to access the care you need. VA is building a high-performing integrated health care network to deliver the best of VA and the community. This integrated network will give Veterans more choices to access care and ensure care is delivered where and when you need it.

9. What is my responsibility for copayments to my other insurance?

- Nothing. VA is now the primary coordinator of benefits for VCP, so you are only responsible for your VA copayment.
- Your VA copayment will be determined by VA after the care is provided. VA copayments will be billed by VA after the appointment.

10. How does the new VCP extension law affect me?

- A new law, enacted April 19, 2017, made three key changes to help improve the VCP. The law removed the expiration date for the program, made VA primary coordinator of benefits for services provided to you, and it removed barriers with sharing necessary health information with community providers.

More Information

- Please refer to the Veterans Choice Program website for more information about the program, its benefits, and eligibility criteria [here](#).
- Providers interested in participating must establish a contract with one of the contractors, Health Net Federal, or TriWest Healthcare Alliance. For more information, about how to participate please visit the [Veterans Choice Program website page for providers](#).



VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM LAW CHANGES

FACT SHEET

On April 19, 2017, President Trump signed a law that removes the Aug. 7, 2017, expiration date and allows VA to utilize funding dedicated to the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) until it is exhausted. The VCP is a critical program that increases access to care for Veterans by authorizing millions of appointments for Veterans in the community. This fact sheet highlights the three changes made to the VCP.

Change 1 – Removal of Expiration Date:

The law removes the Aug. 7, 2017, expiration date for the VCP. The VCP will continue until the original \$10 billion is spent. Based on current estimates, funds for the VCP will last through January 2018, but could shift to fall 2017 if more Veterans use the program.

Impact to Veterans:

- Veterans eligible for the VCP will continue receiving care from providers in the community.

Impact to community providers:

- Community providers can continue delivery care to Veterans.

Change 2 – Primary Coordinator of Benefits:

VA is now the Primary Coordinator of Benefits for services provided to Veterans under the VCP. This common sense change VA requested from Congress more closely aligns the VCP with the other community care programs.

Impact to Veterans:

- Before this law change, some Veterans were required to pay the cost-shares/copays associated with their private health insurance. Now, those Veterans will not have to pay the cost-shares/copays to their private, health insurance carrier.

Impact to community providers:

- Originally, some community providers had to bill the Veterans' private health insurance and the VCP. With the law change, community providers will now only have to bill the VCP.

Change 3 – Information Sharing:

Previously, VA had a restriction different from other health care providers regarding the exchange of health information. This law removes these restrictions and ensures that community providers have access to appropriate health information for Veterans, and brings VA in line with other health care providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information. We emphasize that this does not create an exception to, or weaken in any manner, the protections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Impact to Veterans:

- Veterans will experience improved continuity and quality of care because community providers will have appropriate access to necessary medical records.

Impact to community providers:

- Community providers will now have access to all appropriate health information for Veterans.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Has eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) changed?

No. The law did not change eligibility for the VCP. Please refer to the VCP website for information regarding eligibility [here](#).

Did the law make the Veterans Choice Program permanent?

No. The law allows VA to use the remaining funds available for the VCP. VA has partnered with Congress to work through remaining legislative needs to build a single, community care program.

Do Veterans still have to provide VA their private health insurance information?

Yes. The Choice law requires Veterans to provide VA with their private health insurance information in order to use the program. The new law means that Veterans will no longer be responsible for cost-shares/co-pays associated with their private health insurance. It also means community providers will no longer have to bill a Veteran's private health insurance and the VCP; they will only have to bill the VCP.

Does the information-sharing provision in the law put my health information at risk?

No. This law does not put any health insurance information at risk. Previously, VA had restrictions different from other health-care providers regarding the exchange of Veterans' health information. This law removes those restrictions and ensures that community providers have access to appropriate health information for Veterans, and brings VA in line with other health providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information.

Did the law provide VA the authority it needs to reform the Veterans Choice Program?

This law makes meaningful improvements for the VCP, but more needs to be done. The law is a bridge to allow VA time to partner with Congress and all of its stakeholders to create one community care program that is simple to administer, easy to understand, and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff.



VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM FLYER

You can download the flyer [here](#).



VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a benefit that allows eligible Veterans to receive health care from a community provider rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.

How to know if you may be eligible

- ✓ Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that you need to wait **more than 30 days** for an appointment?
- ✓ Is your residence **more than 40 miles** from the closest VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician?
- ✓ Do you need to travel by air, boat or ferry to the closest VA medical facility?
- ✓ Do you face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition?

How to get started

- 01 Gather information about any other health insurance coverage you have (e.g. employer, union-based health plans)
- 02 Call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198 to confirm your eligibility and schedule an appointment

Call the VCP
Call Center at
866-606-8198

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM (VCP) ELIGIBILITY DETAILS

To be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program, a Veteran must be enrolled in VA health care and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The Veteran is told by his/her local VA medical facility that he/she will not be able to schedule an appointment for care either:
 - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran's physician determines he/she needs to be seen
 - Within 30 days of the date he/she wishes to be seen
- The Veteran lives more than 40 miles driving distance from a VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician
- The Veteran needs to travel by air, boat, or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to his/her home
- The Veteran faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to a VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons
- The Veteran's specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons
- The Veteran lives in a State or Territory without a full-service VA medical facility which includes:
 - Alaska
 - Hawaii
 - New Hampshire (Veterans are not eligible under this criterion if they live in New Hampshire and live within 20 miles of the White River Junction VAMC)
 - The United States Territories (excluding Puerto Rico which has a full service VA medical facility)

To verify eligibility, Veterans must call the VCP Call Center at:
866-606-8198



QUESTION & ANSWER BY TOPIC

ELIGIBILITY

How can I confirm if I am eligible for the VCP?

To be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program, a Veteran must be enrolled in VA health care and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The Veteran is told by his/her local VA medical facility that he/she will not be able to schedule an appointment for care either:
 - Within 30 days of the date the Veteran's physician determines he/she needs to be seen
 - Within 30 days of the date he/she wishes to be seen
- The Veteran lives more than 40 miles driving distance from a VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician
- The Veteran needs to travel by air, boat, or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to his/her home
- The Veteran faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to a VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons
- The Veteran's specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him/her to determine if he/she is eligible for any of these reasons
- The Veteran lives in a State or Territory without a full-service VA medical facility which includes:
 - Alaska
 - Hawaii
 - New Hampshire (Veterans are not eligible under this criterion if they live in New Hampshire and live within 20 miles of the White River Junction VAMC)
 - The United States Territories (excluding Puerto Rico which has a full service VA medical facility)
- Please ensure that when a Veteran is in doubt about any of their eligibility or care, they call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198.

What happens once I have been determined as eligible?

If you are a distance-eligible Veteran, call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198 to set up an appointment. When you call you will be asked for your name, full address, and name of your preferred community physician. A physician will be recommended to you if your preferred physician does not participate in the program. If you are a wait list-eligible Veteran, you will receive a phone call from a VA partner (a non-VA phone number) to help set up your appointment.

One of the eligibility factors is the inability to get an appointment within 30 days. Can you expand on what this means?

If the VA facility is not able to schedule your appointment to occur up to 30 days from your clinically indicated date, you will be eligible to participate in the VCP for that particular appointment. If no such clinically indicated date can be determined, you will qualify for the VCP if the VA facility is not able to schedule your appointment to occur up to 30 days from the date you prefer to be seen.



What does clinically indicated date mean?

The clinically indicated date is the date you and your medical provider agree should be the next date you are seen for care. If the VA medical facility is unable to schedule an appointment up to 30 days from that date you may be eligible for the VCP.

Is the 40 mile calculation based on the distance from a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic or the main VA Medical Center where I am enrolled?

This calculation is based on the driving distance from your permanent residence, or an active temporary address, to the closest VA Medical facility (including Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and VA Medical Centers) that has a full-time primary care physician.

I have to commute to the nearest VA Medical Center by boat; can you explain the Air, Boat and Ferry eligibility requirements?

If your local VA medical facility eligibility staff determines that you must travel from your residence to the nearest VA medical facility by air, boat, or ferry, they will inform you that you are eligible for the VCP. Once you are informed of your eligibility, call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198.

I didn't get my Choice Card, what do I do?

You do not need your Choice Card to access the VCP. If you didn't receive a Choice Card, or have lost your Choice Card, call 866-606-8198 to find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment.

If I do not qualify for the VCP, are there other options I can use to access health care outside the VA?

Yes, there are other community care programs you may be able to use. Each program has its own eligibility requirements. Please talk to your VA medical provider or visit the [VA Community Care website](#) for more information about these programs.



QUESTION & ANSWER BY TOPIC

PROCEDURES

Can I call my non-VA doctor to make an appointment?

No, please call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198.

If my appointment wait time is over 30 days or I live more than 40 miles away, can I see my doctor at VA?

Yes, the VCP is an opportunity for Veterans to choose how they would like to receive care. Even if you are eligible for the Program, you may see your doctor at VA.

My doctor doesn't currently participate in the VCP, can he/she join?

Yes. VA is actively seeking to expand its network of community providers. Your provider can call 866-606-8198 to learn more about the VCP and to get more information on how to join the VCP Provider Network. If your preferred provider is not available under the VCP, VA will recommend other providers in your area. A fact sheet on how to become a VCP provider can be found [here](#).

If I cancel an appointment and then reschedule, how will that change the clinically indicated date?

If you cancel or reschedule, your provider will specify a new clinically indicated date. If the re-scheduled appointment is more than 30 days from that date, then you may be eligible for the VCP.

How do I get my prescription filled if I use the VCP?

The community provider you see through the VCP can issue a prescription for up to a 14 day supply of a national formulary drug. You may have the 14 day supply filled at any non-VA pharmacy of your choosing. Prescriptions can be reimbursed through the Business Office/Non-VA Care Coordination Office at VA facilities. This reimbursement may take 30-45 days to process, and requires a copy of the prescription and the original receipt. Veterans cannot be reimbursed at the VA Pharmacy. For prescriptions needed past 14 days, please follow standard procedures to fill a prescription at the VA pharmacy.

Can I use the VCP and see my doctor at my local VA medical facility?

Yes. You do not need to choose between the two. The VCP is here to make your life easier to access the care you need. If you use the VCP to receive one type care, you can still continue to receive care at the VA for other types of care. For example, if you qualify for the VCP to see an urologist under the 30 day eligibility requirement, you can go see your VA physician for any other type of care.



QUESTION & ANSWER BY TOPIC

COVERED CARE

If I can't get a primary care appointment in 30 days, can I use the VCP?

Yes, primary care is covered under the VCP.

Is emergency care covered by the VCP?

No, emergency care is not covered under the VCP. All care under the VCP must be preauthorized. Please contact your local VA medical facility for more information on non-VA emergency care or find more details [here](#).

Do I qualify for the VCP for specialty care or elective surgery, such as cataract surgery?

Yes, you can be referred to the VCP for any type of care except emergency and long-term care.

If I use prosthetics, can I use the VCP?

Yes.

As a female Veteran, I require obstetrics and gynecology services, but the nearest VA medical facility doesn't offer this care. Can I go ahead and use the VCP to get an appointment outside the system?

You may be eligible to use the Program if VA can't schedule your appointment within 30 days of the clinically indicated date, or if no such date can be determined, then your preferred date.



QUESTION & ANSWER BY TOPIC

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Do I submit my personal insurance information if I qualify for the VCP?

Yes. The VCP requires Veterans with other health insurance (OHI) to provide that information.

Am I responsible for Medicare, Medicaid, or TRICARE cost-shares?

No. These plans are not considered OHI for purposes of the VCP. You will not be billed by the VCP for any of the cost-shares associated with these plans.

Will copays be collected by the community provider?

VA copays will not be collected at the time of the appointment, but will be billed by VA after the appointment, in the same way as receiving care at your local facility. If you are subject to copayments now, you will be subject to the same copayment requirements under the VCP. Your copay amount will be determined after the service is received.

What if I don't have a VA copayment?

Veterans will be responsible for the same VA copayments for VCP that they are responsible for any other care VA provides. So if a Veteran does not have a VA co-payment, then they will not be responsible for a copayment under VCP.

Am I responsible for my private insurance deductible if I get care through the VCP?

No. VA is the primary coordinator of benefits for the VCP, so you are only responsible for your VA copayment.

Can I use the VCP if I don't have personal insurance?

Yes. While submission of private health insurance is a requirement of the VCP, not having private health insurance does not exclude you from the program.





Plug-and-Play Content

This content can be used as source material for any traditional communications you develop or outreach events that your organization plans.

Text for Electronic and Print Publications.....	16
Sample Briefing Slides.....	18

TEXT FOR ELECTRONIC AND PRINT PUBLICATIONS

If your organization has a regular newsletter, you can include information about the Veterans Choice Program. These samples can be customized for specific audiences.

BRIEF BLURB

You might be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). VA launched the VCP on November 5, 2014 as part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA). This program gives eligible Veterans the option to receive health care from providers in their communities. Since program inception, over 1.75 million unique Veterans have utilized the VCP to receive health care closer to home. The program was extended in April 2017 and will remain in effect until all funds are exhausted. The legislation extending the program also means some Veterans no longer need to pay cost-shares/copays to their private health-insurance providers. Additionally, Veterans will experience improved continuity and quality of care because community providers will have appropriate access to necessary medical records.

To get started, call 866-606-8198. VA will work with you to determine your eligibility, and if you are eligible to help schedule you for care with a local community provider.

EXTENDED TEXT

Option for Care: Veterans Choice Program

Have you heard about the Veterans Choice Program (VCP)? VA launched the VCP on November 5, 2014 as part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA). This program gives eligible Veterans the option to receive health care from providers in their communities. The program was extended in April of 2017 and will remain in effect until all funds are exhausted. In addition to extending the program, the legislation made two changes:

- VA is now the primary coordinator of benefits for services provided to Veterans under the VCP.
 - Before this law change, some Veterans were required to pay the cost-shares/copays associated with their private health insurance. Now, those Veterans will not have to pay the cost-shares/copays to their other health insurance.
 - Originally, some community providers had to bill the Veteran's private health insurance and the VCP. With the law change, community providers will now only have to bill the VCP.
- The VA is now in line with other health care providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information.
 - Veterans will experience improved continuity and quality of care because community providers will have appropriate access to necessary medical records.
 - Community providers will now have access to all appropriate health information for Veterans.

You might be eligible for the VCP if you are enrolled in VA health care and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You are told by your VA medical facility that you will not be able to schedule an appointment for care either:
 - Within 30 days of the date your physician determines you need to be seen
 - Within 30 days of the date you wish to be seen



- You live more than 40 miles driving distance from a VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician
- You need to travel by air, boat, or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to your home
- You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to a VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, or a medical condition. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you are eligible for any of these reasons
- Your specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, warrants participation in the program. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you are eligible for any of these reasons
- You live in a State or Territory without a full-service VA medical facility which includes:
 - Alaska
 - Hawaii
 - New Hampshire (Veterans are not eligible under this criterion if they live in New Hampshire and live within 20 miles of the White River Junction VAMC)
 - The United States Territories (excluding Puerto Rico which has a full service VA medical facility)


To find out if you are eligible for the VCP, call 866-606-8198. If you are satisfied and wish to continue with your current VA care, there is nothing you need to do at this time.



SAMPLE BRIEFING SLIDES

If you are hosting a gathering of Veterans for an informational session and would like to spread the word about the VCP, you can use these slides to get you started.

You can download them [here](#).



Veterans Choice Program

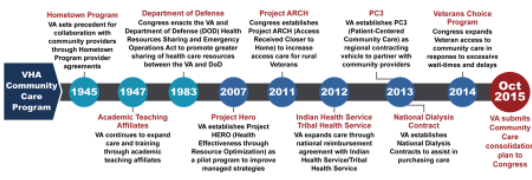
Sample Veterans Choice Program 101 Slides

Insert Your Logo Here

DATE/MONTH 2017

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

A Brief History of VA Community Care



VA Community Care Program

1945 Homebased Program: VA sets precedent for collaboration with community providers through Homebased Program provider agreements.

1947 Academic Teaching Affiliates: VA continues to expand care and training through academic teaching affiliates.

1983 Department of Defense: Congress enacts the VA and Department of Defense (DOD) Health Resources Sharing and Emergency Operations Act to promote greater sharing of health care resources between the VA and DOD.

2007 Project HERO: VA establishes Project HERO (Health Resource Optimization) as a pilot program to improve managed strategies.

2011 Project ARCH: Congress establishes Project ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home) to increase access care for rural Veterans.

2012 Indian Health Service: VA expands care through national reimbursement agreement with Indian Health Service/Tribal Health Service.

2013 PC3: VA establishes PC3 (Patient-Centered Community Care) as regional contracting vehicle to partner with community providers.

2014 National Dyslexia Contract: VA establishes National Dyslexia Contracts to assist in purchasing care.

Oct 2015 Veterans Choice Program: Congress expands Veterans access to community care in response to excessive wait-times and delays. VA submits Community Care consultation plan to Congress.

VA Community Care includes a number of separate programs that have become a part of the broader community care tapestry over time

Community Care Overview

Some of the Services VA Community Care Offers...

- Dental Care
- Telehealth
- Women's Health Care
- ER Care
- Eye Care
- Specialty Care
- Inpatient Care
- Nursing Home Care
- Maternity Care
- Primary Care
- Outpatient Care
- Home Health Care



Veterans Choice Program

- Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA), which established the Veterans Choice Program (VCP), passed in **August 2014**
- VCP **expands** availability of medical services for eligible Veterans with community providers
- New legislation signed in April 2017 **removed** the August 7, 2017 expiration date for the VCP



VA Community Care offers numerous services that are delivered to Veterans through multiple programs throughout the country


Determining Eligibility

- Wait times for care beyond stated VA wait-time goals
 - Local VA medical facility can't schedule your appointment within **30 days**
- Geographic Access/Distance
 - Current residence more than **40 miles** from closest VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician
- Unusual or excessive travel burden
 - Excessive burden** to travel to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, a medical or other specific facts

Making an Appointment

If you believe you have met the eligibility criteria to receive this VA benefit for community care:

Call the Veterans Choice Program Call Center at
866-606-8198
 to verify your eligibility and set up an appointment.





Social Media Support

Social media is a high-impact, low-cost option for directly communicating with Veterans. This approach can assist with the distribution of VCP information to a broad Veteran audience, drive the conversation regarding program eligibility requirements, and provide a forum for Veterans to ask questions. Several social media resources are available:

Use Social Media to Connect with Veterans about the VCP.....	20
Inserting Written Copy into Posts.....	21
Enhancing Posts with Graphic Images.....	22
Linking to VCP Videos Online.....	23
Making Posts Searchable with Hashtags.....	24

USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO CONNECT WITH VETERANS ABOUT THE VCP

Partner with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on social media efforts to connect with a broader audience of Veterans and other stakeholders. Publish the sample posts provided and enhance them with graphics, hashtags, keyword search tags, and links to amplify important information about the VCP. Add more value to your feeds by sharing and retweeting existing VCP posts.

VA uses many social media platforms. Check out the accounts below for more information:

VA Blog: <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/>

VHA Facebook: www.facebook.com/VeteransHealth

VHA Twitter: www.twitter.com/VeteransHealth

VHA Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/veteranshealth/sets/

VHA YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/VeteransHealthAdmin

In addition to the VA and VHA pages, most local VA Medical Centers have individual Facebook pages and/or Twitter handles. Locate local facilities in the [VA social media directory](#).



INSERTING WRITTEN COPY INTO POSTS

VCP social media posts can be used on a variety of platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram. They can include written text, graphic images, links, and hashtags.

Facebook Text

Sample texts for Facebook, LinkedIn, and other platforms:

- VA is partnering with community providers to build a high-performing, integrated health care network. This network will bring together the best of VA and the community to provide Veterans with high quality care closer to home. Call **866-606-8198** or visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** to learn more about the Veterans Choice Program (VCP).
- Attention Veterans: You might be eligible to receive health care in the community through the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). Visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** for more information.
- VA is streamlining its community care programs so Veterans and their families know exactly when and how they can seek care from community providers through the Veterans Choice Program. Call **866-606-8198** or visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** to learn more.
- VA is making progress in streamlining the VCP to deliver a program that is easy to understand, simple to administer, and meets the needs of Veterans, community providers, and VA staff. Call **866-606-8198** or visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** to learn more.
- Many Veterans now have the option to receive non-VA health care rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility. The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) offers care closer to home for eligible Veterans. Call **866-606-8198** or visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** to learn more.
- Veterans – Need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home? You could be eligible to receive health care closer to home through the Veterans Choice Program. Call **866-606-8198** or visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** to learn more.

Twitter Text

Sample text for Twitter's 140 character limit:

- Have questions about the VCP? Get the facts by calling **866-606-8198** or visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** **#CommunityCare**
- Veterans: You may be eligible to access health care closer to home through the VCP. Call **866-606-8198** or visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact**
- The VCP allows eligible Veterans to access health care in non-VA hospitals and clinics. Learn more: **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** **#CommunityCare**
- Looking for more information about the VCP? Call **866-606-8198** for all the news you can use! **#CommunityCare**
- Looking for more information on the #Veterans Choice Program? Visit **www.va.gov/opa/choiceact** for all the news you can use! **#CommunityCare**

ENHANCING POSTS WITH GRAPHIC IMAGES

Graphics

Bring more attention to your Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn posts by adding graphic elements:



Veterans Choice Program

As a Veteran, find out if you are eligible for health care from an approved provider outside of the VA.

- 1 **Call: 866-606-8198**
- 2 **Visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact**
- 3 **Talk: to your health administrator**

New legislative changes offer a streamlined process to get care faster and closer to home.



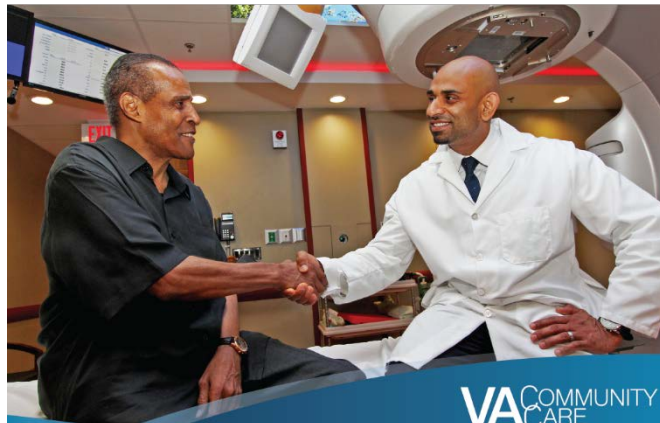
The Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act


Three key changes:

- 1 Removal of the Aug. 7 expiration deadline
- 2 VA as the primary coordinator of benefits
- 3 More seamless sharing of health information

For more information:
www.va.gov/opa/choiceact

To find out if you are eligible for the VCP and to make an appointment call: 866-606-8198






The Veterans Choice Program (VCP)

VCP is a temporary program to improve Veteran's access to health care by allowing eligible Veterans to use approved health care providers outside of VA.

To find out if you are eligible call:
866-606-8198

For more information visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

LINKING TO VCP VIDEOS ONLINE

YouTube

Share or link to the following videos when posting about the VCP:

- **VCP Legislative Update Video:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vy_o43nar3w&t=89s
- **What will the Future of Community Care Look Like?** www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A204DM8Zmg&t=12s
- **Improving VA Community Care:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqrDrluRmul&t=135s
- **Veterans Choice Program:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOIEEzX9nqU



MAKING POSTS SEARCHABLE WITH HASHTAGS

Hashtags

Recommended VCP hashtags include:

- **#CommunityCare** – The #CommunityCare hashtag references VA Community Care programs and its network of community providers.
- **#Veterans** – The #Veterans hashtag helps former military personnel, their caretakers, and other stakeholders to find relevant information.
- **#VCP** – While used less frequently, the VCP hashtag can add additional references to the program.





Using VA as a Resource

Involving VA in Your Outreach	26
Staying Connected and Up-to-Date.....	27



INVOLVING VA IN YOUR OUTREACH

Planning to host town halls, conference calls, or webinars?

The Department of Veterans Affairs is happy to provide a Veterans Choice Program expert to share in-depth information about the program.

Please reach out for preparation materials, sample invitations, top-line messaging, and slides for Veteran town hall meetings.

Looking for ideas on where to distribute flyers, fact sheets, and Q&A's?

VA can help you partner with local places Veterans frequent such as the post office, grocery store, hardware store, etc.

Need additional social media post ideas?

VA can provide you with a "Fact of the Week" for both Facebook and Twitter to deliver information to Veterans in a bite-size form on a consistent basis.

Want the latest facts and figures about the VCP?

VA can provide you with regular updates about the progress of the program and the statistics about the use of the program by Veterans.

To receive any of the above information, please contact

Jill Snyder, VHA Communications
Jill.Snyder@va.gov



STAYING CONNECTED & UP-TO-DATE

To learn more about the Veterans Choice Program, visit:

[Veterans Choice Program](#)

To determine if a Veteran is eligible, visit:

<http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apps/choice/>

To view the most up-to-date Veterans Choice Program Resources, visit:

[Veterans Choice Program Resources](#)

For more information about the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, visit:

[Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014](#)

To find out about other aspects of VA medical care or to learn more about enrolling in VA health services, call 877-222-VETS or visit:

<https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/>

